

CLAIMS

- 1 1. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game
3 to at least one user, the method comprising:
4 deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing an episode into an episodic game module; and
6 transmitting the episodic game module to at least one user terminal.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 scheduling intervals for generation and transmission of episodic game
3 modules.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
2 responsive to a technological improvement occurring during a first part of
3 an interval for generation and transmission of an episodic game
4 module, incorporating the technological improvement into the
5 episodic game module scheduled for generation and transmission
6 for that interval.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 responsive to a technological improvement occurring during
3 implementation of an episode, incorporating the technological
4 improvement into the episodic game module scheduled for
5 generation and transmission for that interval.
- 1 5. The method of claim 2 further comprising:

2 responsive to a real world event occurring related to the storyline of the
3 game during an interval, incorporating the event into the episodic
4 game module scheduled for generation and transmission for that
5 interval.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein generating episodic game modules further
2 comprises:

3 generating a technology module and content module for each episodic
4 game module to allow modification of the technology module
5 without requiring modification of the content of an episodic game
6 module.

1 7. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game
3 to at least one user comprising:

4 constructing a plurality of episodes to relate the storyline;
5 implementing an episode into a game module; and
6 transmitting the episodic game module to at least one user terminal.

1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein an episodic game module is transmitted at
2 periodically scheduled intervals.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the episodic game modules are transmitted
2 monthly.

1 10. A method of providing an Internet-enabled game comprising:

2 receiving information regarding a user's current state in the game; and
3 responsive to the current state, enabling episodic content to be accessed by
4 a user.

1 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 responsive to the current state, transmitting a voice mail message related
3 to the user.

1 12. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 responsive to the current state, transmitting a voice mail message related
3 to the user.

1 13. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 responsive to the current state, transmitting a pager message related to
3 the user.

1 14. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 receiving a search request from a user; and
3 responsive to the current state of the user in the game, transmitting search
4 results to the user.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the search results are game-related responsive to
2 the search request being game-related and the current state of the user indicating that the
3 user is permitted to receive game-related search results.

1 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the search results are not game-related
2 responsive to the current state of the user indicating that the user is not permitted to
3 receive game-related search results responsive to the search term entered by the user.

1 17. The method of claim 10 wherein current state information comprises a
2 notification from an application module resident on a user's terminal that the user has
3 accessed a web page.

1 18. The method of claim 10 wherein current state information comprises a user
2 action.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is calling a predefined telephone
2 number.

1 20. The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is accessing a predetermined web
2 site.

1 21. The method of claim 18 wherein the user action is requesting a specific search
2 term.

1 22. The method of claim 10 wherein episodic content is stored within a third-party
2 website that is content-related to the storyline, and the users are directed to the web-site
3 to discover the episodic content.

1 23. The method of claim 22 episodic content is placed on a third party web site for
2 compensation related to user traffic to the web site related to users searching for the
3 episodic content.

1 24. The method of claim 10 wherein an episode is made available responsive to
2 determining whether a user has submitted payment for the episode.

1 25. An apparatus for delivering episodic content comprising:
2 a content server for storing a plurality of episodic gaming modules to
3 which user terminals may have access responsive to receiving
4 authorization, the episodic gaming modules having a related
5 storyline, and in which authorization is granted to access the
6 episodic gaming modules serially.

1 26. A method of episodically delivering entertainment content to a plurality of users
2 comprising:
3 delivering an initial episode of content, wherein the initial episode
4 comprises an initial set of technology for enabling an initial
5 episode of content; and
6 delivering subsequent episodes at periodically scheduled intervals to at
7 least one user.

1 27. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 obtaining an e-mail address from a user; and
3 delivering information related to the entertainment content to the obtained
4 e-mail address.

1 28. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 providing an e-mail address to a user; and

3 delivering information related to the entertainment content to the provided
4 address.

1 29. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 placing information relevant to content of the episode on a web site
3 maintained by a third party; and wherein the information
4 comprises a request that the user access the web site to find the
5 relevant information.

1 30. The method of claim 26 comprising:
2 identifying a relevant current event news story; and
3 transmitting information regarding the current event news story to at least
4 one user to provide additional information related to the episode
5 content.

1 31. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 determining a link to a web site containing the news story; and wherein
3 transmitting information comprises transmitting link information to
4 the web site containing the news story to at least one user.

1 32. The method of claim 30 further comprising:
2 creating a false news story related to the identified news story, wherein the
3 false news story links the content of the episode to the identified
4 news story.

1 33. The method of claim 32 further comprising:

2 publishing the false news story on a web site maintained by a developer of
3 the entertainment content.

1 34. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 sending a message to a user's voice mail box, wherein the message is
3 related to the entertainment content.

1 35. The method of claim 34 further comprising the step of:
2 providing a user with a voice mail box.

1 36. The method of claim 34 wherein sending message further comprises sending a
2 message to the user's voice mail wherein the message is represented to be from a
3 character in the entertainment content.

1 37. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 obtaining a facsimile number from a user; and
3 transmitting information relating to the entertainment content to the
4 obtained facsimile number.

1 38. The method of claim 26 further comprising:
2 providing a facsimile number from a user; and
3 transmitting information relating to the entertainment content to the
4 providing facsimile number.

1 39. The method of claim 26 wherein new technology is used to implement an episode,
2 further comprising:

3 incrementally delivering data to related to enabling the new technology as
4 part of a plurality of episodes to a user.

1 40. The method of claim 26 wherein an episode requires a video file to be played by a
2 user, further comprising:

3 incrementally delivering data comprising the video file as part of a
4 plurality of episodes to a user.

1 41. The method of claim 26 wherein an application developer implements the
2 episodes delivered to the users using technology from at least one third-party vendor, and
3 the third-party vendor updates the technology delivered to the users without participation
4 of the application developer.

1 42. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game
3 to at least one user, the method comprising:

4 deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing an episode into a sequence of episodic game modules; and
6 periodically transmitting to one of the episodic game modules to at least
7 one user terminal.

1 43. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user
2 terminals, a method for delivering content comprising a storyline for an electronic game
3 to at least one user, the method comprising:

4 deconstructing the storyline into a plurality of episodes;
5 implementing an episode into an episodic game module; and

6 periodically permitting access to one of the episodic game modules by at
7 least one user terminal.

1 44. In a network comprising a content server and a plurality of connected user
2 terminals, a method for providing entertainment content comprising a storyline for an
3 electronic game to at least one user, comprising:

4 receiving a request from a user to gain access to an episode of the
5 electronic game; and
6 delivering an episode of the electronic game to the user.

1 45. The method of claim 44 further comprising:

2 receiving an access code from a user to gain access to an episode of
3 entertainment content;
4 verifying validity of the access code; and
5 responsive to the access code being validated, allowing access to the
6 episode of entertainment content.

1 46. The method of claim 44 further comprising:

2 determining a date for the request received from the user; and
3 permitting access to the requested episode responsive to the determined
4 date being within a permitted window for delivery.